

NSC BRIEFING

12 August 1954

CHINA FLOOD

- I. Chinese Communists now admit flood damage amounts to major disaster.
  - A. Before, insisted things under control, damage slight.
  - B. Now admit 6% China's cultivated land flooded--this some 23,000 square miles, nearly size Indiana.
  - C. Most in rice-rich Central China; normally grows over 10% China's food.
- II. Peiping genuinely surprised.
  - A. Fooled by temporary Yangtze drop at Hankow--late July.

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But river rose again: by 10

August, all-time record

height--57 feet (previous

high, in 1931 flood, 53-1/2

feet). *by 12 August, 51 inches above  
1931.*

III. 1931 flood worst in modern Chinese

history.

A. Affected an area of 95,000

square miles: did US \$1.3

billion damage.

B. Washed out millions in cities,

also 25 million farmers.

IV. Present food purchases abroad

insufficient to meet disaster.

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C. Moreover, Peiping committed to  
export 270,000 tons rice to  
Ceylon for rubber; 200,000  
tons to USSR.

V. Peiping's public admission flood  
damage suggests might now welcome  
foreign relief.

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C. Soviet aid likely: Pravda

first noted flood on 9  
August.

D. Peiping's prestige in Orbit;  
Sino-Soviet "friendship"  
make gesture necessary.

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VI. Also precedent for Communist  
acceptance Western relief.

A. East Germany, Hungary have  
accepted US flood relief,  
Rumania politely declined,  
Czechoslovakia has not replied.  
Hungary also accepted Dutch  
offer of 50,000 guilders  
(US \$13,000).

B. East German propaganda plays  
acceptance of US offer as  
expression policy of  
"furthering...international  
understanding."

VII. Peiping's position more awkward re  
possible US offer.

A. Has always denied possibility  
of "genuine friendly aid"  
from US.

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- B. Internal program relies more  
heavily on anti-American  
propaganda than do satellites.
- C. Would certainly prefer aid from  
Orbit, Asian "neutrals" or  
other recognizing states.

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